



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

For Release: **IMMEDIATE**
Date: October 25, 2004

Contact: Vanessa Capobianco
Phone: 919/733-5612

GOV. EASLEY PROCLAIMS OCTOBER 26th AS "SENIOR CARE DAY"
Encourages Eligible Seniors to Sign Up for Prescription Drug Assistance

RALEIGH – Gov. Mike Easley is proclaiming Oct. 26, 2004 as "Senior Care Day" to promote enrollment in the state's prescription drug assistance program for seniors.

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, which administers the program, is working with aging advocates across the state to provide sign up locations in all 100 counties.

"We want every senior eligible for Senior Care enrolled and receiving assistance with their prescription drugs," said Easley. "This free program provides valuable financial assistance including drug discounts to our state's seniors. We will be actively enrolling seniors on October 26, but citizens can sign up for Senior Care by visiting www.ncseniorcare.com or by calling 1-866-226-1388."

Seniors must enroll before Dec. 31, 2004 to receive a full \$2,400 in direct benefits through the end of next year.

"Our seniors were there for us when we needed them," said Easley. "We must be there for them now. We are working with agencies across the state to ensure that all eligible seniors are enrolled and that the enrollment process is as simple as possible."

Senior Care was first implemented in 2001. In September 2004, Easley announced the expansion of Senior Care, allowing more seniors to participate, increasing the number of drugs that are covered and reducing out-of-pocket prescription drug costs. To be eligible for the expanded Senior Care program, a person must meet the following criteria:

- Be age 65 or older;
- Have a total annual income not exceeding \$23,275, if single and \$31,225, if married; and,
- Not be eligible for Medicaid or employer based retirement prescription drug coverage not including a Medicare supplement policy, Veterans' benefits or a Medicare + Choice plan.